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## REVIEWS

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*Population: A Study in Malthusianism.* By WARREN S. THOMPSON, PH.D. Whole number 153 of the Studies in History, Economics and Public Law. Columbia University Press, 1915. Pp. 216.

This important volume embodies a statistical test of the validity of Malthusianism, as the author construes that doctrine. Malthusianism is taken to mean, first, the tendency of population, and hence, later, to increase faster than the supply of subsistence, or improvement in productivity; and, secondly, the lowering of the class of labor by the pressure thus exerted in it, or the restriction of population by checks administered to it by means of either unconscious agencies or conscious fear of lessened subsistence (chap. i).

After noticing the views of several authors concerning the truth or falsity of Malthus' doctrine (chap. ii), Dr. Thompson considers the evidence relative to it. He examines the relation of wages and prices (chap. iii) to obtain a perspective of the economic condition of the laborers of the world. By a comparison of the indices of wages and prices for the United States and the United Kingdom from 1900 to 1912, for France from 1900 to 1910, and for Germany from 1895 to 1910, the conclusion is reached that prices have steadily risen since 1900 and that real wages have fallen since 1907 and probably since 1900, France being the only exception to the rule. In that country, however, most of the rise in prices has occurred since 1907, since which date wages have risen less rapidly than prices.

Chaps. iv-vii deal with the question of the amount of available foodstuffs produced by the chief nations. The statistics of production of the staple crops and of the more important of the minor ones, and of animals are surveyed. It is found that there have been substantial gains in production, but these have taken place in new countries and have been due to bringing into cultivation new, rich lands. Some of the older European countries show small gains in production, while others evince losses both in the amount produced and in the acreage. Production per acre increases slowly and the data indicate that "no epoch-making discoveries for increasing the yield" during the time considered (1880-1910) have been made.

The United States is selected as a type of the new countries with a view to observing the possibilities of agricultural development. Its total land area is 1,903,289,600 acres, but when all deductions for mountain, arid, swamp, and other waste lands are made we find that only 297,321,672 acres can be added to the present area in farms of 878,798,225 acres, an increase of 31.1 per cent. Since 46.2 per cent of land already in farms is unimproved, it is apparent that there is opportunity for large extension of agriculture. At the present rate of improvement there would be about 1,000,000,000 acres improved by 1960, but it must be remembered that the available new lands and the unimproved acreage will prove less productive than the land now cultivated. The author thinks there is an obvious limit to the quality and amount of agricultural lands.

The author is over-conservative, I think, in his estimate of new land to be made available in the United States. He excludes about 74,000,000 acres of swamp lands, because they are not immediately available, and about 141,000,000 of irrigable lands. The amount does not appear large in view of the total, but it is very important, for the swamp lands are among our richest soil.

The birth-rate, death-rate, and the consequent national increase of populations of the chief countries of the world from 1860 to 1910 are studied to discover whether or not there are signs of a slackening increase or a stationary stage. The data indicate that, save for France, there is no evidence of either. This, of course, results from the fact that the death-rate has fallen as rapidly as, or faster than the birth-rate has risen (chap. viii).

A survey of the growth of population and food supply (chap. ix) serves to substantiate Malthus' claim that the volume of population responds to variations in the available food. France is the only exception to the rule that increase of population follows prosperity, and vice versa. Immigration is an element in the situation, since in recent times populations may more easily seek the food in other nations than import it. The author has no explanation to offer for the unique peculiarities of France. Its population is practically stationary, yet it has actually increased the amount of available subsistence. He thinks a careful psychological study of the French people will be necessary to exhibit how the economic motives are mediated for the various classes relative to reproduction.

Borrowing a thought from the preceding chapter, we are able to project the rate of growth of population during the half-century 1860-

1910 forward two hundred years. Since the rate of increase among people of European stock was 79.36 per cent during that period, were the rate to continue, by 2010 A.D. they would number 1,713,755,000 and by 2110, 5,513,365,000 people. This would be about three times as many people as now live. It appears that there need be no alarm over the "declining birth-rate," but that there should be much thought spent upon planning for the future.

At the rate colonization of new lands is taking place it will not be long before all the agricultural regions of the earth will be occupied. What of the increase of population then? The revolution in production which the invention of the steam engine brought by reason of facile transportation operated to expand agricultural production of the last century. No such revolution may be expected again, and the further increase of production through the improvement of agricultural implements is not probable.

In chap. x Dr. Thompson demonstrates that both in agricultural production and in manufacture the law of diminishing returns is actively operating. In agriculture, in the United States, he finds that, for 1900-1910, the labor time per acre increased slightly, the working capital increased 54.3 per cent, while the average increase of production was about 8.0 per cent. In the previous decade labor time per acre decreased, the value of means of production increased 1.5 per cent (live stock included in both decades), while the average acre production increased about 9.0 per cent. When the poorer quality of lands comes under cultivation, this process of diminishing returns will operate all the more severely.

Nor can we hope for great or continued release from the law through the employment of "scientific farming," for "it is doubtful whether, in the long run, the knowledge is more economical than the implements." Where intensive farming has been in use, as in the United Kingdom, the acreage of production of cereals and pulse has increased but 8.0 per cent during twenty-five years which shows it is cheaper to import foods than to seek to enlarge the area of production. Neither the acreage nor the yield of the chief crops in European countries evinces a decided tendency toward an increase. Hence, "intensive agriculture offers but little consolation to the great industrial nations of today."

But if we stake our hope of evading the law on manufacture, we are again doomed to disappointment. First, since the purchasing power of labor has decreased in recent years, it is obvious that any increment accruing to manufacturing has not gone to the laborers, who constitute

the bulk of the population. Secondly, the increment has not been absorbed as excess of exports over imports, for the per capita value of exports in 1912 was only \$5.44 while in 1900 it was \$6.85, and, quantitatively measured, there was a decrease of 36.5 per cent in goods exported. Thirdly, if there is a surplus, it does not appear in the per capita increase in the instruments of production, for, after deducting from the increase in national wealth all sums not involved in manufacturing processes, it is found that the increase in productive goods for the decade amounts to but about 7.0 per cent. Fourthly, if the well-to-do are absorbing the supposed increment, it cannot be large, for the income-tax-paying element is but about 2.0 per cent of the productive population, or 2.0 per cent of 20,000,000.

Should we include in the manufacturing process the legitimate social costs of the business, such as injuries to workers, old-age pensions, high cost of living, slums, and bonded indebtedness of political units due to the failure of industry to meet its legitimate obligations, it might appear that the present supposed increment is in reality a deficit.

The conclusion (chap. xi) is that Malthus, as interpreted, was correct, and that either we must simplify our standard of living to permit an increasing population or the rate of increase must be lowered. If the rate of increase is to be lowered, which class should be selected to practice the decrease and which to effect an increase? This question of selection the author hopes to make the subject of a future study.

The volume is supplemented by three appendixes containing detailed statistics relevant to textual considerations and is accompanied by several graphs. Dr. Thompson has performed a valuable service in giving the world this detailed and thoroughly executed investigation of a vital subject. The data are complete enough to make a world-exhibit, and the conclusions drawn inevitably arise from the facts. Many of us will be obliged to revise our ideas and our published works in view of his demonstrations, but his work will not be unwelcome for that.

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*Die Philosophie der Geschichte als Soziologie.* Von DR. PAUL BARTH.

Erster Teil: Grundlegung und kritische Uebersicht. Zweite, durchgesehene und sehr erweiterte Auflage. Leipzig: R. Reisland, 1915. Pp. xi+821.

The first edition of this book appeared eighteen years ago. It was reviewed in this *Journal* (III, 700). In the meantime sociologists have